

ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS OMEGAS

OMEGA-3s (75% of daily fat calories) - Brain fortifying fats

WHY YOU NEED THEM: The body converts omega-3s into an acid called DHA, which provides critical nutrition to brain and neuron cells and promotes heart health. Low blood levels of DHA are a significant risk factor for Alzheimer's dementia. Several studies also suggest that DHA may prevent insulin resistance, a hormone irregularity that scientists say may be one reason for our national weight gain. In one study, people whose muscle cells contained low levels of DHA were more likely to be obese. Another study found that while Israeli people consume fewer calories than we do, their rates of obesity and diabetes are higher. Researchers say the missing nutrient is omega-3 fatty acids.

WHERE TO GET THEM:

Salmon, sardines, bluefish, tuna, mackerel, nuts, flaxseed oil, canola oil

OMEGA-6s (15% of daily fat calories) - Immunity boosting fats

WHY YOU NEED THEM: Omega-6 fats are converted into gamma linoleic acid (GLA) and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), two nutrients that research has proven stimulates immunity. Lab studies have shown that GLA stimulates the fighter T cells of the immune system, and amazingly, can cause cancer cells to revert to normal cells. Omega-6s are also needed to produce prostaglandins, hormones that lower our vulnerability to high blood pressure, heart attacks, asthma, arthritis and migraines. Keep consumption of Omega-6's low in relation to Omega-3's

WHERE TO GET THEM:

Vegetable oils (corn, safflower, soybean), nuts, seeds, leafy greens.

OMEGA-9s (10% of daily fat calories) - Cholesterol fighting fats

WHY YOU NEED THEM: Omega-9s aren't considered essential fatty acids like -6s and -3s, but they are extremely important in a healthy fat diet. In fact, some studies suggest the omega-9s may be even more important to promoting heart health than -3s. One study found that consuming nuts that are rich in omega-9s at least five times a week can lower heart attack risk by as much as 50%. A Tuft's University study found that oleic acid (an omega-9 fat found in certain oils) can protect arteries from cholesterol buildup. Other studies suggest omega-9s may also help prevent breast cancer. Plus, they provide the satiety factor that helps prevent overindulgence.

WHERE TO GET THEM:

Olive oils, seed oils high in oleic acid, nuts, seeds and avocados.

